

Collaborative Model for Reducing Truancy

Beth Cox, Municipal Judge
Cynthia DiCamelli, Family Resource Coordinator



Oregon School District

- Suburban Madison
- About 3600 students in 6 buildings
- High School – 1100-1200
- Annual Budget - ~\$50m
- 500 FTE
- 91% Caucasian
- 19% Free and Reduced Lunch

Truancy

- Why address truancy?
 - Truant students are less likely to graduate
 - Observed pattern of truancy prior to drug-use related expulsions
 - Social factors- high school drop outs earn less, have shorter life spans and are more likely to be involved in crime

Truancy: A Community Concern

- Community Partners
 - Municipal Judge
 - School District
 - Community Police

Beginning in 2007, partners agreed to aggressively enforce truancy statutes to reduce overall truancy and increase graduation rate

Truancy Tools

- Wisconsin law (s118.163)
 - Allows the Court to order:
 - full attendance
 - forfeitures (which are fines)
 - suspension of a driver's license
 - counseling,
 - supervised work, or community service
 - attendance at after school or summer school
 - revocation of a work permit
 - participation in teen court
 - curfew
 - a parent or guardian to participate in counseling

Participants: School

- Parents may excuse up to 10 days
- Additional absences require medical or other documentation
- 1st Letter sent after 5 absences
- 2nd Letter sent after 10 absences
 - Meet with building admin
 - Develop attendance plan
 - Offer supports

Participants: Law Enforcement

- School Liaison Officer
 - Writes truancy citation
 - May also cite for AODA, disorderly conduct
 - Travels among buildings as needed
 - Based at OHS

Participants: Court

- Created separate court sessions for truancy cases
- One to three sessions per month
- Closed sessions
- Student, parent(s), building administrators, family resource

Collaborative Model

- Components
 - Dynamic Assessment
 - Remedial Plan
 - Court Supervision

Collaborative Model

- Dynamic Assessment
 - Initial hearing interview
 - Mental health concerns
 - Medical concerns
 - Family dynamics

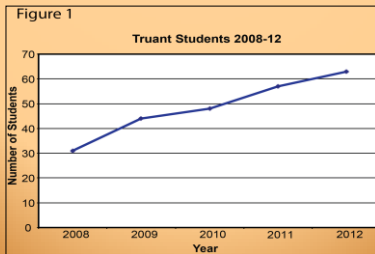
Collaborative Model

- Remedial Plan
 - Student, parent and school observations
 - Attendance plan components
 - May include medical or psychological evaluation
 - Closed campus
 - Loss of drivers license, job, activities
 - Required attendance at after-school tutoring
 - Parenting classes/plan
 - Fine usually held in abeyance
 - Follow up court appearance may be scheduled

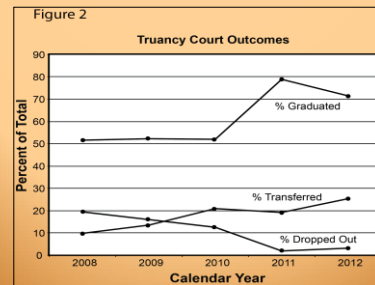
Collaborative Model

- Court Supervision
 - Plan includes reasonable benchmarks- improved grades, course completion or graduation
 - Monitored by school and reported to court
 - Student may be asked to return
 - Student may “earn” reduction in fine by attending consistently

Truancy Results



Truancy Results



Truancy Results

- Collaborative interventions have proven successful
- Extending attendance awareness to lower grades
 - Create a “habit of the mind” around school attendance
- Mental health concerns continue to be a barrier
 - Mental Health Task Force formed in 2013

So How Does
This Work In Practice?

Thank You!

- Beth Cox: coxlaw2@frontier.com
- Cynthia DiCamell: cad@oregonsd.net